



CASE STUDY

UNIFICATION: THE EUROPEAN UNION

Will there be
a United States
of Europe?



EU headquarters in
Brussels, Belgium

Europe's long history of conflict reached a crisis in World War II (1939-1945). In the wake of that destructive war, two goals emerged: to rebuild the nations' shattered economies and to prevent new conflict. Some people believed the best way to achieve both goals was to unify Europe. As you read the Case Study, consider the pros and cons of that idea.

Steps Toward Unity

In 1951, France and West Germany began the process of unification by signing a treaty that gave control of their coal and steel resources to a multinational group, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). Italy and the Benelux countries also joined the ECSC. The six countries' leaders thought this alliance would have many positive results. Because the nations would depend on each other for industrial resources, their economies would suffer if they fought again. No country could prepare for war secretly because each knew what the others were manufacturing. In addition, the ECSC would set

a tone of cooperation that would help Europe rebuild its economy.

The next step toward unity came in 1957 with the formation of the European Economic Community (EEC), also called the Common Market. This alliance removed trade barriers, set common economic goals, and allowed people to live and work in any member country. Between 1958 and 1968, trade among the EEC nations quadrupled.

In 1967, the EEC merged with the ECSC and another European alliance to become the European Community (EC). In 1973, the EC began to admit other European nations. (See the map on page 327.)

The Road to European Unity





The European Union Today

In 1993, the Maastricht Treaty took effect, and the European Union (EU) replaced the EC. With 15 member nations, the EU faces many issues. They include settling political and economic differences, replacing national currencies with the euro, and expanding EU membership.

ECONOMICS AND POLITICS EU members wonder how the union will affect their national economies. For example, workers may move to areas with higher wages, creating shifts in national populations.

Further, some countries believe that switching to the euro will mean losing control of economic factors such as interest rates. Others don't want to give up the national identities associated with having their own currencies. But many people believe the euro has benefits. These include greater business efficiency and increased international trade. In 1999, financial institutions began to calculate transactions in euros. Euros will begin to be used in everyday life in 2002.

The EU also affects politics. For example, on February 4, 2000, Joerg Haider and his Freedom Party became part of a coalition government in Austria. (In a coalition government, several parties share power.) In the past, Haider had made statements that were sympathetic to Nazi Germany, so EU nations criticized Austria for its support of Haider. Haider did step down, but some observers fear that a controversial leader like Haider could some day tear the EU apart.

EXPANDING THE EU One of the complex issues facing the EU is growth. In time, it might expand to 28 countries that presently have about 475 million people. Running such a huge alliance could be difficult. Many of the proposed members were once Communist nations. In general, they are less prosperous and have little experience of democracy. Such differences may create tensions that the EU will have to resolve.

On the following pages, you will find primary sources about the EU. Use them to form your own opinion.

SEE

PRIMARY SOURCE A

SEE

PRIMARY SOURCE B

SEE

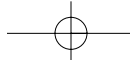
PRIMARY SOURCE C

The European Union, 2000



SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

- MOVEMENT** In what years did the largest expansion of the European alliance occur? What countries joined?
- REGION** Which region of Europe is not part of the EU? Why?



CASE STUDY

PROJECT

Primary sources A to E on these two pages present differing opinions on expansion of the EU. Use these sources and your own research to prepare for a panel discussion on EU expansion. You might use the Internet and the library for research.



RESEARCH LINKS
CLASSZONE.COM

Panel Discussion

Suggested Steps

1. Choose a European (EU or non-EU) country to represent.
2. Research your country's position on EU expansion. Use encyclopedias, books, or the Internet to help you find the right information.
3. Consider the following questions during your research.
 - Why do certain countries want to join the EU?
 - What do current EU members have to gain and lose in expansion?
 - Why do certain countries want to remain independent?
4. Create a visual to be shown during the panel discussion.
5. Give a 2–3 minute speech that introduces your country's position.

Materials and Supplies

- Writing paper
- Posterboard
- Felt-tip markers
- Encyclopedias and reference books
- Computer
- Internet access

PRIMARY SOURCE A

Political Commentary *Global Britain, a conservative group in the United Kingdom, gave this view of the euro on January 25, 1999. Although the United Kingdom belongs to the EU, it is reluctant to adopt the euro, a central issue for EU expansion.*

The Single Currency is a political project designed to hasten the creation of a Single European State in which nation-states like Britain would be provinces. . . . In joining the Single Currency, a nation hands over control of its interest rate, exchange rate and gold and currency reserves, as well as control over tax and spending, to [the EU]. All of this is set out in the Maastricht Treaty which Britain signed in 1992. . . . There are 43 nation-states in Europe, of which only 11 have joined the "single" European currency. Those 11 countries, unlike Britain, are in varying degrees economic satellites of Germany and France. . . . A single currency eliminates the interest rate and exchange rate safety valves, which allow changing national economies to adjust to each other. . . . Preparations for the "single" currency have already helped to cause mass unemployment in Germany, France, and Italy, where real jobless rates are at least three times as high as in Britain.

PRIMARY SOURCE B

Speech *Günter Verheugen of Germany, the European Commissioner for Enlargement, expressed his views on EU expansion in speeches in the United States on April 4–6, 2000. Germany is an original member of the EU and its predecessors.*

Enlargement is the biggest challenge the Union is facing at the dawn of the new millennium. . . . We are committed to this historical mission: to integrate the Central and East European countries which can and want to participate in our common achievements. . . . Our objective is to promote political and economic stability—and make this process irreversible. . . . What are the political benefits? First and foremost, the enlargement process is vital for securing political stability, democracy and respect of human rights on the European continent as a whole. . . . Political stability and freedom will be increased throughout Europe. Against the background of many years of crisis . . . the only way to achieve lasting stability in Europe is further integration.

PRIMARY SOURCE C

Data Eurobarometer is a company that surveys public opinion. It asked people living in the 15 EU countries how they felt about various countries joining the EU. This chart lists the various countries and the support for them.

Level of EU Member Support for Possible Members, 1999			
NON-EU COUNTRY	FOR (%)	AGAINST (%)	NO OPINION (%)
Norway	70	12	18
Switzerland	70	13	17
Malta	50	26	24
Hungary	46	31	23
Poland	43	35	22
Cyprus	42	33	25
Czech Republic	40	35	25
Estonia	36	38	26
Latvia	35	38	27
Slovakia	35	39	26
Lithuania	35	39	26
Bulgaria	35	40	25
Romania	33	43	24
Slovenia	32	42	26
Turkey	29	47	24

SOURCE: Standard Eurobarometer

PRIMARY SOURCE D

Political Analysis Edmund L. Andrews published this article in the New York Times on June 21, 1999. He examined some of the problems and issues of EU expansion into Central Europe.

By becoming [EU] members, the Central European nations would eventually gain full access to European markets. Their citizens would be free to live and work throughout Western Europe. . . .

As more detailed negotiations loom . . . between the European Union and the Poles, Czechs, and Hungarians . . . both sides face the need for painful change. . . .

Central Europeans have the added burden of history. Many of them remain suspicious of Germany, the European Union's largest power and Central Europe's neighbor. And most adults, reared under Communism, are still adjusting to . . . the Western way of doing things.

As for the European Union, the prospect of a flood of labor from the East raises irrational fears among Westerners already grumbling about too many immigrants. . . . Another big fear [in Central Europe] is that foreigners—by which most people mean Germans—will buy up their land, which is another basic right accorded to anybody living within the European Union.

PRIMARY SOURCE E

Political Cartoon Pat Oliphant, a political cartoonist, shows the leaders of the EU trying to navigate stormy seas on a euro.



PROJECT Checklist

Have I . . .

- ✓ researched my country's perspective?
- ✓ answered all relevant questions?
- ✓ created an interesting, colorful visual for the discussion?
- ✓ practiced my speech?